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UNCLAS ANKARA 001488

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TURKEY: ERDOGAN AND AK REPORTEDLY SWEEP SIIRT
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

REF: A. ANKARA 1410

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1364

[1](#)1. According to unofficial election results as released by Siirt governor's office, R. Tayyip Erdogan and his AK Party swept all three seats in March 9 repeat of parliamentary election in Siirt province. The elections were re-run owing to electoral irregularities in Siirt during the Nov. 3 national elections.

-- According to this preliminary report, voting turnout, at 62% of the approx. 119,200 eligible voters, was low by traditional national standards.

--AK far outstripped its nearest rival, main opposition CHP; AK reportedly won almost 56,000 (84.7%) of the 66,000 valid votes to CHP's 9,100 (13.8%). Fringe leftist parties won the rest.

--Pro-Kurdish DEHAP (HADEP) Party was the big winner in Siirt on Nov. 3. However, it failed then to clear the nationwide 10% vote hurdle, meaning that even if it won on March 9 DEHAP could not send deputies to the legislature. In the event, DEHAP this time around boycotted and urged its supporters to stay home (ref A). As a result, turnout was lower than on Nov. 3.

[1](#)2. Erdogan, previously banned from electoral politics and unable to run on Nov. 3, will now take a seat in the parliament. As reported in ref B, we expect Erdogan to receive his certification of victory and take the M.P. oath the week of March 10. More important, Erdogan's entry into Parliament sets the stage for his eventual assumption of the prime ministership, although precisely when he does so remains an open question. We have heard that current P.M. Abdullah Gul will resign as soon as Erdogan enters Parliament and that Erdogan intends to make Gul his foreign minister.
PEARSON